

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS
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FILE ONLY

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High-Ranking KGB Defector

UTLEY: A Soviet spy has defected to the United States. According to Art Kent, our national security correspondent, he is important and he brought with him Soviet information stamped top secret.

ART KENT: A Soviet connection to Palestinian guerrillas training and operating in Northern Africa has been broken. According to intelligence sources, Oleg Agranients (?) was a KGB liaison officer to the Palestinians until he defected last month. The defection, analysts say, is a major setback to Soviet intelligence operations in that area.

Agranients, who was stationed at the Soviet Embassy in Tunis, was also responsible for KGB operations in Northern Africa. Intelligence sources say he has provided the names of KGB agents in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Libya. That would be a significant blow to the KGB, which will now have to replace all those agents and possibly the networks of which they were a part.

In addition, according to former CIA Deputy Director George Carver, a defector of Agranients' rank would have other valuable information.

GEORGE CARVER: He would not have been posted to this senior assignment overseas without having held previous assignments of almost equivalent seniority, and he could have told us a lot about what he had derived from those assignments.

KENT: Agranients is just the latest Soviet intelligence official to defect. Best known is Vitaly Yurchenko, the KGB colonel who redefected. There was also Oleg Gordievsky, the KGB station chief in London; Sergei Boka, a military intelligence agent in Greece, Viktor Gudorev, a KGB agent in that same country; and another high-ranking KGB agent who has never been identified.

The CIA will not confirm Agranients' defection, nor reports from intelligence sources that he had been a CIA double agent for as long as three years before he defected.